

Message Text

SECRET POSS DUPE

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53

ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 PM-04 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 L-03 EB-07

SAJ-01 PRS-01 CIAE-00 INR-07 NSAE-00 ACDA-05 /060 W
----- 057882

R 120922Z JAN 76

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1087

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

DIA WASHDC

CIA WASHDC

CINCPAC

CINCPACAF

CINCPACFLT

COMNAVFORPHL SUBIC

13TH CLARK

AIRINTG FT BELVOIR VA

MIG FT SHAFTER HI

COMIPAC HONOLULU HI

DIRNSA FT GEORGE E MEADE MD

S E C R E T MANILA 0571

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, PFOR, RP

SUBJECT: PHILIPPINE INTREST IN SPRATLEYS

REF: CINCPAC (DTG 080307Z JAN 76)

1. EMBASSY FINDS SPECULATION CONTAINED PARAS F AND G
REFTEL TO EFFECT THAT PHILIPPINES AND PRC HAVE REACHED
AGREEMENT ON OIL EXPLORATION RIGHTS IN EXCHANGE FOR
MUTUAL SUPPORT OF EACH OTHERS TERRITORIAL CLAIMS EXCEEDS
BOUNDS OF CREDIBILITY.

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2. IT IS POSSIBLE PRC DID NOT PRESS CLAIM TO ISLANDS

DURING MARCOS VISIT IN JUNE 1975 (WE HAVE NO INFO ONE WAY OR OTHER BUT WE ASSUME NEITHER PRC NOR GOP WOULD SEE ADVANTAGE IN RAISING ISSUE THAT WOULD DIVIDE THEM IN COURSE OF STATE VISIT TO OPEN RELATIONS). SILENCE ON THIS ISSUE WOULD BE APPRECIATED BY BOTH SIDES BUT WOULD IN NOW WAY BE INTERPRETED AS AGREEMENT ON TERRITORY OR ANYTHING ELSE. WE HAVE NO KNOWLEDGE OR INKLING OF ANY SUCH AGREEMENT SUBSEQUENT TO ESTABLISHMENT OF RELATIONS. WE WOULD, IN FACT, BE ASTOUNDED IF PRC WOULD TAKE ACTION TO DEROGATE ITS CLAIMS TO CHINA SEAS IN VIEW ITS VIGOROUS POLEMICAL AND MORE LIMITED MILITARY ASSERTIONS OF RIGHTS OVER ALL "CHINA" SEAS SINCE 1971 IN EXCHANGE FOR GOP BACKING ON OTHER MATTERS.

3. WE DO NOT BELIEVE SECRET AGREEMENT WITH PRC NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN GOP ACTIONS IN SPRATLEYS IN RECENT YEARS. PHILIPPINES HAS GIVEN EVERY INDICATION OF DETERMINATION TO MAINTAIN ITS CLAIM UNILATERALLY. PHILIPPINES HAS STREAILY INCREASED ITS INTEREST IN ISLANDS CLAIMED BY IT (PARTICULARLY THE SIX ISLANDS OF KALAYAAN) DESPITE WELL KNOWN COMPETING CLAIMS OF DRV AND PRC, AND AGGRESSIVE ACTION OF BOTH TOWARDS SPRATLEYS AND PARACELS RESPECTIVELY, AND DESPITE GOP'S INABILITY TO GET U.S. TO BACK IT UNDER TERMS OF MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. IT HAS KEPT OIL EXPLORATION UNDER ACTIVE CONSIDERATION AND A PHILIPPINE-SWEDISH JOINT VENTURE IS IN PROCESS OF WORKING OUT SERVICE CONTRACT TO COMMENCE OPERATIONS IN REED BANK AREA (NEAR KALAYAAN AREA). IN ADDITION, IT HAS PLACED MILITARY FORCES ON ISLANDS AND BUILT SOME PERMANENT STRUCTURES. MAJOR WEAKNESS TO ITS POSTURE HAS BEEN INABILITY TO MOVE ITS FORCES EXCEPT BY SEACRAFT. AIRSTRIP CONSTRUCTION PRESUMABLY DESIGNED TO MEET NEED FOR ABILITY TO MOVE FORCES RAPIDLY ON AND--MORE LIKELY--RAPIDLY OFF ISLANDS IN EVENT OF CONFLICT.

4. BECAUSE OF LIVELY INTEREST WE HAVE IN POSSIBILITY OF PHILIPPINES ATTEMPTING TO INVOKE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY IN EVENT HOSTILITIES IN SPRATLEY AREA, HOWEVER, WE FULLY APPRECIATE AND SUPPORT EFFORTS TO OBTAIN AS PRECISE

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UNDERSTANDING AS FEASIBLE OF DEVELOPMENTS IN SPRATLEYS.
SULLIVAN

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